

The personal computer 1 cannot check-in contents checked-out to the portable device 5-1 by another personal computer not shown in the drawings. The personal computer 1 cannot check-in contents checked-out to the portable device 5-2 by another personal computer. The personal computer 1 cannot check-in contents checked-out to the portable device 5-3 by another personal computer.

In response to a request from the personal computer 1, the EMD server 3 supplies contents to the personal computer along with data relating to the contents (e.g., music piece title, playing restrictions, etc.), via the network 2.

The contents which the EMD server 3 supplies are encoded by a predetermined encoding method, and encrypted with a predetermined encryption method. The EMD server 3 supplies a key for deciphering the contents to the personal computer 1.

In response to a request of the personal computer 1, a WWW (World Wide Web) server 4 supplies data corresponding to a CD from which contents are read (e.g., CD album title, CD record company, etc.) and data corresponding to the contents read from a CD (e.g., music piece title, name of composer, etc.), to the personal computer 1.

The portable device 5-1 stores the contents supplied from the personal computer 1 (i.e., check-out contents, etc.) along with data relating to contents (e.g., music

piece title, rights information, etc.). The portable device 5-1 plays the stored contents based on the data relating to the contents, and outputs the contents to an unshown headphone set or the like.

For example, in the event that a user attempts to play contents a number of times exceeding the number of playing times described in the rights information stored as data relating to the contents, the portable device 5-1 stops playing of the corresponding contents. In the event that a user attempts to play contents after expiration of the playing period described in the rights information stored as data relating to the contents, the portable device 5-1 stops playing of the corresponding contents.

The user can remove the portable device 5-1 storing the contents from the personal computer 1 carry the portable device 5-1, and further play the contents stored therein so that music or the like corresponding to the contents can be listened to through the headphones or the like.

The portable device 5-2 stores the contents supplied from the personal computer 1 along with data relating to contents. The portable device 5-2 plays the stored contents based on the data relating to the contents, and outputs the contents to an unshown headphone set or the like. The user can remove the portable device 5-2 storing the contents from the personal computer 1 carry the portable device 5-2, and

further play the contents stored therein so that music or the like corresponding to the contents can be listened to through the headphones or the like.

The portable device 5-3 stores the contents supplied from the personal computer 1 along with data relating to contents. The portable device 5-3 plays the stored contents based on the data relating to the contents, and outputs the contents to an unshown headphone set or the like. The user can remove the portable device 5-3 storing the contents from the personal computer 1 carry the portable device 5-3, and further play the contents stored therein so that music or the like corresponding to the contents can be listened to through the headphones or the like.

The memory card 9-1 is inserted into a terminal device 6 installed at a shop or the like, and contents which the user has purchased by operating the terminal device 6 are stored therein along with corresponding rights information. The predetermined contents stored in the memory card 9-1 are permitted to be imported based on the rights information, and moving thereof is not permitted.

The memory card 9-1 storing the contents is mounted in a slot in the personal computer 1. The personal computer 1 imports the contents stored in the memory card 9-1 mounted thereto. The personal computer 1 generates rights information permitting only check-in or check-out